

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
MINUTES OF MEETING
October 23, 2003

A meeting of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education was held at the Shepard Building - 255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 and convened at 5:10 p.m.

In Attendance:

J. DiPrete, P. Guida, G. Grove, M. Mancieri, J. Gaines, F. Caprio and H. Gallo.

Public Remarks

Juan Lopez of the Children's First Coalition spoke to board members about communicating with the board on issues of interest to Providence parents such as dropout rate, length of school days and class size. The group is looking for a process for the Regents to respond about issues that the group brings before them.

Mr. Steven Fishback distributed comments on agenda item # 5 – Implementing the Progressive Support & Intervention Initiative – (attached). Mr. Fishback told Board members that he feels that the initiative is very weak and that it doesn't, or won't, assure student achievement, especially for poor kids. He said that the document is silent on school segregation by race and income; and that waiting to require change after four years of data is too long to wait.

Chairman's Remarks

- Chairman DiPrete reported that he had attended the National High School Summit in Washington, a day long conference focusing on the requirements of NCLB and the NASBE conference in Baltimore. He told members that he especially enjoyed a presentation by Katie Haycock of the Education Trust on "Improving Achievement and Closing Gaps Between Groups." He suggested that the Regents might want to use the materials at a retreat in January.
- Fidelity has offered to host a Regents retreat. Details and dates will be forthcoming.
- The budget transmittal letter to the Governor has been sent over and he knows that we would like the opportunity to speak with him about it. Jeff Grybowski has written a reply and will be scheduling a meeting.

Approval of Minutes

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, The minutes of the Board of Regents Meeting of September 25, 2003 be approved as presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Update on School and District Classification Notifications

Commissioner McWalters reported that the district and school classifications were released at

a press conference that included the Governor. He reported that even though some of the

results are controversial, he feels that the Rhode Island Framework is very good. The department has now begun the process of working with the designated low performing, need improvement districts/schools – 98 schools have been identified as low performing, need

improvement. He briefly reviewed the identification process and criteria - if a district has 40%

of its students identified as low performing and/or two of the three levels needing improvement (4, 8 or 10) they have been identified as low performing, need improvement.

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Implementing the Progressive Support & Intervention Initiative

RIDE Assistant Commissioner, David Abbott distributed the policy level document, “Organizing for Progressive Support and Intervention: 2003-04 School Year,” which outlines a standard-based system with high expectations, a system of measurement that measures what you’re doing; and evaluates how you’re doing it. He then spoke to the group about Rhode Island’s accountability system and how it drives student achievement through capacity building, identification of successful practices, professional development and program evaluation.

He also talked about district expectations (such as parent involvement) and the legal mandates of the seven expectations. He reviewed the PS&I “schedule,” which outlines the exact intervention mechanisms.

Mr. Abbott spoke to the group about the work with Annenberg on data and the PS&I Steering Committee and work group. He discussed what individual districts might need based on the analysis and how department teams will work directly with districts.

(Regent Caprio and Regent Gallo left at 6:10 p.m.)

Members of the Board discussed the use of the In\$ite data; the connection between the requirements of NCLB and Rhode Island's intervention process; what the Regents/department will need to do in the future as part of the intervention process; and how to ensure that the districts don't blame the results/classification on their special needs kids.

SAELP Update

Deputy Commissioner Todd Flaherty invited Marianna Haynes from NASBE to the table to talk about SAELP, as attached. SAELP II is a key component of Rhode Island's state-district strategy to improve the preparedness of education leaders and the conditions in which they work in order to improve student learning, especially for the children with the greatest educational needs. Ms. Haynes updated the members of the board on the Wallace SAELP III direction, which is moving toward a state – district cooperative system to develop policy that supports a comprehensive approach to education leadership.

Deputy Commissioner Flaherty then updated the group as follows:

- SAELP II grant to be submitted in November;
- All district SAELP demonstration sites grant funds need to be expended by December 31, 2003;
- There are currently additional funds that districts may request (up to \$20,000) if these additional dollars will be expended by December 31, 2003.

Dr. Flaherty also informed members that the Wallace Foundation will be looking for an evaluation piece that will provide input on student achievement. A new RFP will be out in November; proposals will be due in January 2004.

Update on State Literacy Panel

Todd Flaherty reported that during the last legislative session, Representative Sherlock had placed in law requirements for personal literacy plans for all kids supported by professional development. In response, the department needed to do some work on developing guidance for PLPs. Additionally, the high school regulations also called for literacy plans and Rhode Island's Reading First Grant that was approved for this year calls for a 20-member steering committee to develop policy around K-12 personal literacy. Subcommittees will be formed around tasks, as identified by the full steering committee; four regional forums will be scheduled to

review recommendations and get input and there will be a December 12 summit to discuss literacy plans.

Committee Reports

- **High School Restructuring** – Todd Flaherty reported out for Colleen Callahan, the Chairman of the High School Restructuring Committee. On November 13th a group from the department along with educators from the districts will meet to discuss and edit the Draft preliminary guidance piece for the high school regulations. This document will be released to the districts by the end of November for input from the districts; and then released in final form in January. The committee has also been discussing middle schools and working on planning a middle school summit. The Regents committee is working with RIMLE and Linda Soderberg of the Department of Labor & Training to formulate an agenda for the middle school summit.
- **School Administrator and Teacher Quality** - Regent Gaines reported that her committee has been discussing the qualifications to link Rhode Island certification requirements with NCLB highly qualified teacher requirements. On November 13 the Regents will be asked to adopt the elementary education content knowledge test and the elementary education content area exercises test as the sole testing requirement for the issuance of the Rhode Island certificates in the areas of early childhood education, elementary education, early childhood special education and special educator: severe/profound disabilities; and to eliminate and combine a number of Rhode Island teaching certificates in specific areas.

Assistant Commissioner, David Abbott spoke to the group about Teacher Performance Development and the HOUSSE Plan; and reminded Regents that there will be two public hearings on alternate certification on October 21 and 28, 2003

Commissioner's Report

- Commissioner McWalters told members that now that the transmittal letter to the Governor had gone over, the department has been asked to do "white papers" to back up our budget request. When they are completed and before they are sent over to the Governor's Office, they will be distributed to the Regents for comment.
- The Commissioner updated the members of the board on the issue of the MET School occupying space in the Shepard Building – "taking class space away from CCE and CCRI." Chief Legal Counsel, Jennifer Wood said that she has been meeting with CCE staff members and URI staff representing President Carothers and thought that the issue of the MET in the Shepard Building had been resolved. However, the issue is now being re-visited

again and in light of these most recent conversations the department has again been involved in discussions with CCE. The Commissioner then explained that the issue may be moot in light of the Governor's fiscal fitness study, which has been charged with re-thinking the use of all state buildings, including the Shepard Building.

- Attended the "Jobs for the Future" national forum in Washington
- Rhode Island is still on track to receive a Gates Grant to restructure high schools, but it has been delayed temporarily.

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session

Adjournment

With unanimous consent the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.